

FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SECURITY

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Approved For Release 2004/01/30 : CIA-RDP86B00269R000900080006-8

PRIORITY

AIR ROUTE

438603

TO : Department of State

721.00/4-1750

FROM : BOGOTA 426 April 17, 1950

7 Enclosures

REF : Embassy's Despatch No. 398 of April 10, 1950

RETAIN OR DESTROY

SUBJECT

CONTINUED INSISTENCE IN CONSERVATIVE PRESS REGARDING
IMPORTANCE OF UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE REPORTS ON
ASSASSINATION OF GAITAN.

With reference to Embassy's Despatch No. 398 of April 10, 1950, entitled "Events and Press Comment Surrounding Observance of Second Anniversary of Gaitan's Assassination," I have the honor to report that Conservative El Siglo continued to editorialize during the week following the anniversary on the importance of revelations by Rear Admiral HILLENKOTTER, made before a Congressional Investigating Committee, concerning Communist involvement in the assassination of Liberal leader, Jorge Eliecer GAITAN. The Liberal Press countered with its own version of the event, and attempted to show that El Siglo was trying to deceive public opinion with a diversionary attack. However some Liberal papers did agree that the Liberal investigators had not done a thorough job.

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There are enclosed editorials from El Siglo of April 11, 12 and 13, entitled respectively, "And the Admiral?", "Mister A.G." and "The Conspiracy of the Mistery". In each of these articles there is developed the thesis that Gaitan was conspiring with "international agents of Moscow" in preparation for a Liberal uprising to take place in Bogotá during the Panamerican Conference; that when Gaitan was forced to make a public statement regarding the attack on the Ecuadorian Ambassador, he chose to repudiate this attack and any other attempt to disturb the Conference, and was eliminated by his own fellow Liberals and the Communists, who alone stood to gain from a popular uprising at that time.

El Siglo uses the statements made by Admiral Hillenkotter in an attempt to show that the Liberal investigators deliberately overlooked these clues for fear of implicating their own party and revealing the then existing collaboration between the Liberal party and international Communism.

It is at least possible that this attack against the Liberal party was not entirely inspired by the occasion of the April 9th anniversary, but was calculated to fulfill a double purpose in Conservative strategy. On the one hand, it fits in with the current Conservative campaign against "impunity" for political crimes. On the other hand, it might, by discrediting

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certain radical elements in the Liberal Party, tend to further widen the incipient split in Liberal ranks and prepare the way for collaboration between rightist Liberal elements and the Conservative Party.

The Department will note that El Siglo has in every case quoted accurately the statements of Admiral Hillenkotter, but it also will recall that his statements were based on unconfirmed intelligence reports, some of which now appear not to have been true.

The Liberal press has replied to the attacks of El Siglo along party lines, and in considerable volume. Only with regard to the original handling of the investigation by Dr. Ricardo JORDAN Jimenez did any of the Liberal papers disagree. La Jornada on April 11 published an article headed "The Gaitan Case was Filed Away a Year Ago," in which it criticized rather bluntly the manner in which Dr. Jordan managed the investigation during the three months immediately following the assassination. El Espectador, on April 13, published an interview with Dr. Jordan replying to these assertions, in which he declared that on the basis of his investigation he felt "the assassination of Gaitan was an isolated act." Both La Jornada and El Tiempo on April 14 disputed this view, with El Tiempo citing the opinion of Judge Francisco de J. GUZMAN, to whom Jordan referred the case in accordance with Colombian law.

In addition to accusing El Siglo of attempting to deceive public opinion, Liberal papers brought out the following principal points to counter the Conservative argument: 1) authorization for social security payments to one Ismael ROA Sierra according by reason of service in the National Police (it is claimed that Ismael and Juan Roa are the same, and it is pointed out that the National Police were controlled by the Conservative Administration prior to April 9); 2) the number of the revolver used by Ros, which corresponded to one confiscated shortly prior to April 9 by the National Police, and 3) evidence that Conservative Administration detectives were at one time conducting a separate investigation behind the back of the judge officially charged with the investigation. Other minor points are brought out, referring mainly to letters warning Gaitan of impending danger, or editorial articles in provincial papers threatening the life of Gaitan. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the Liberal papers, in attempting to implicate the Conservative Party through the National Police, overlook the fact that the National Police revolted en masse in the course of the disturbances of April 9.

With regard to the information obtained from United States sources, only El Espectador made a direct reply to the accusations of El Siglo. In an article on April 12 entitled "What the


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Contribution of the United States to the Proceedings for the Ninth of April?", it gave a detailed review of the reply by the United States Government to the letters rogatory presented by the Colombian Embassy in Washington. It still is not clear that the reply quoted the testimony of the former Polish Military Attaché in Washington, Lt. General Isidor MOULDERY. El Espectador also mentioned the letters supplicatory addressed by the investigating judge to Dr. Laureano Gómez, to which the latter replied in effect that he only knew what he read in the newspapers, but that since the source of such information had been the direct services of the United States, he thought the information quite worthy.

El Tiempo on April 13 added another incidental note to the discussion in an editorial entitled "Investigations", when it referred to the investigation concerning the death of Gerardo ECHANDIA, brother of the Liberal Party Presidential Candidate, Derío ECHANDIA, who was shot in Bogotá last November, and asked whether it might not be convenient to intensify this investigation also.

For the Ambassador:


Robert Newbegin
Counselor of Embassy

Enclosures:

- 1) Clipping from El Siglo, April 11
- 2) Clipping from El Siglo, April 12
- 3) Clipping from El Siglo, April 13
- 4) Clipping from La Jornada, April 11
- 5) Clipping from El Espectador, April 13
- 6) Clipping from El Tiempo, April 14
- 7) Clipping from El Espectador, April 12

cc: Embassy, Quito

436603 STATE, COLOMBIA, BOGOTA
 D# 426
 COLOMBIA/U.S. 17 APR 50
 CONTINUED INSISTENCE IN CONSERVA-
 TIVE PRESS REGARDING IMPORTANCE
 OF UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE
 REPORT ON ASSASSINATION OF
 GAITAN

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 .1.SOC.....W
C LAP.....N
 ...FB EE/8R.....B
 .FDGP.....M
 1A LYIC
 .C.BRST....NA
 ...IRAR....AI
 ...GRREPRO
 1 Director 1091

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FUNDADORES:
LAUREANO GOMEZ — JOSE DE LA VEGA
Director Encargado: ALVARO GOMEZ BURTADO
Gerente: LUIS E. URIBE CUALLA
Jefe de Redacción: RICARDO ZULUAGA MEJIA
Representantes exclusivos en EE. UU. de N. A.
MELCHOR GUZMAN, COMPANY, INC.
45 Rockefeller Plaza — New York, N. Y.

EL SIGLO

DIARIO DE BOGOTA PARA TODO COLOMBIA — Registrado para la tarifa reducida en el Servicio Postal. — LICENCIA NUMERO 4

Las leyes dictadas contra lo dispuesto en la Constitución no son válidas. Y quienes las dictan deben ser sancionados.

AÑO XIV. Diario de la Mañana. — Valor \$ 0.10 NUMERO 4. 838 BOGOTA, COLOMBIA, DOMINGO 14 DE AGOSTO DE 1949 EDICION DE DIEZ Y SEIS PAGINAS. Distribución Aérea: Vías: Avianca, Lanza y Sarta

El Congreso no representa la soberanía

Cuando viola la Constitución

Por temor al comunismo el partido liberal no ha investigado el asesinato de Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. La declaración del general Marshall. ★ Sensacionales revelaciones sobre el crimen. La situación política del país. es de extrema gravedad. Un llamamiento a todos los colombianos.



El doctor Laureano Gómez al dirigirse anoche a la nación por los micrófonos de La Voz de Colombia. En un momento de su discurso el doctor Gómez afirmó que el congreso no representa la soberanía nacional, carece de título para dirigir la vida nacional, mientras está enfrentándose a las normas de la Carta fundamental. (SIGLO FOTO).

EL SIGLO, Bogota, Colombia
14 August 1949

(Reprint of speech made by Dr. Loureano Gomez on Colombian radio 13 August 1949).

"....When the assassination occurred and the storm broke loose and caused those extraordinary and unforgettable happenings, the gravest that have occurred in any city of the continent, Colombian liberty, which was in imminent danger of shipwreck, was saved only at the last minute by the admirable fidelity of the army which liberated the country from communist tyranny and gained thereby everlasting laurels for bravery enabling us to continue to enjoy the sacred privilege of liberty.

"It cannot be forgotten that there followed immediately thereafter a declaration made by another unquestionable authority, Admiral Hillenkoetter, Chief of the Intelligence Service of the United States, who in an investigation of the Bogota incident conducted by the American Senate and in which he and the Intelligence Service were blamed for having permitted General Marshall to proceed to a city where such occurrences could happen, justified his action by explaining that he did, indeed, have information of what was going to happen and that he had communicated such information to the proper persons who should have intervened.

"For reasons which were beyond his (Hillenkoetter) province, this information was not followed-up or it should have been determined that Mister G. had served as intermediary between the Russian legation and Dr. Jorge Eliecer Gaitan for the delivery of funds for apparent political purposes. This is a matter of such significance that it ties in very closely with previous occurrences which I had witnessed and have just related. There was a time when Dr. Gaitan was ready to sabotage the Conference. There was another time when Dr. Gaitan gave up his earlier intentions on the recommendations of the liberal members of the Colombian delegations and recommended that the foreign delegations be treated with great respect. Finally, there was the assassination which resulted in the disturbances which had been originally planned and published in the Communist paper of Belgrade which said that agents of imperialism would have to leave Bogota like rats.... The declaration of Admiral Hillenkoetter bears out the facts that Gaitan had been prepared to give up his original plan in the interests of Colombian national pride and because of urgings from members of his party. In spite of this, his assassination was the signal for the revolution which had been originally planned and resulted in a blot on the pages of Colombian history which will never be erased even with the passing of centuries."

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP

TO		INITIALS	DATE
1	Executive <i>VS</i>		<i>27 Sept</i>
2	Director <i>Ross</i>		
3			
4			
5			
FROM		INITIALS	DATE
1	Asst. Dir. Council <i>WLPc</i>		<i>28 Sept.</i>
2			
3			

<input type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL	<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION	<input type="checkbox"/> SIGNATURE
<input type="checkbox"/> ACTION	<input type="checkbox"/> DIRECT REPLY	<input type="checkbox"/> RETURN
<input type="checkbox"/> COMMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PREPARATION OF REPLY	<input type="checkbox"/> DISPATCH
<input type="checkbox"/> CONCURRENCE	<input type="checkbox"/> RECOMMENDATION	<input type="checkbox"/> FILE

REMARKS:

2 - For the Director's Clipping book.

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